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Gallery and Studio

LAWRENCE ALMA TADEMA.



ALMA TADEMA is one of those few remaining original figures which stand out so rarely now, like sturdy rocks in the smooth sea of a tame and conventional world. London society knows well that short, strongly-built figure with its face of kindly strength, its frank, friendly, observant eyes, its cheery voice. Brimful of energy, of ardent love for all things good and beautiful, he diffuses strength by his mere presence, he lifts those who come in contact with him into higher mental spheres, above the base and sordid interests of every day. He is pre-eminently-gifted with that gift which, according to Goethe, is the highest and happiest that can be bestowed on mankind, that of a personality. It is this that has made Alma Tadema great; he has a personality, and he has dared to be true to it in these modern days when all-levelling conventionality is the mode. "The secret of my success in my art," I have heard him say, "is, that I have always been true to my own ideas, that I have worked according to my own head and have not imitated other artists. To succeed in anything in life one must first of all be true to one's self, and I may say that I have been this." Among modern artists there is no more interesting figure; no wonder, therefore, that he takes high rank in his profession, beside being in his own department unsurpassed and unapproached.

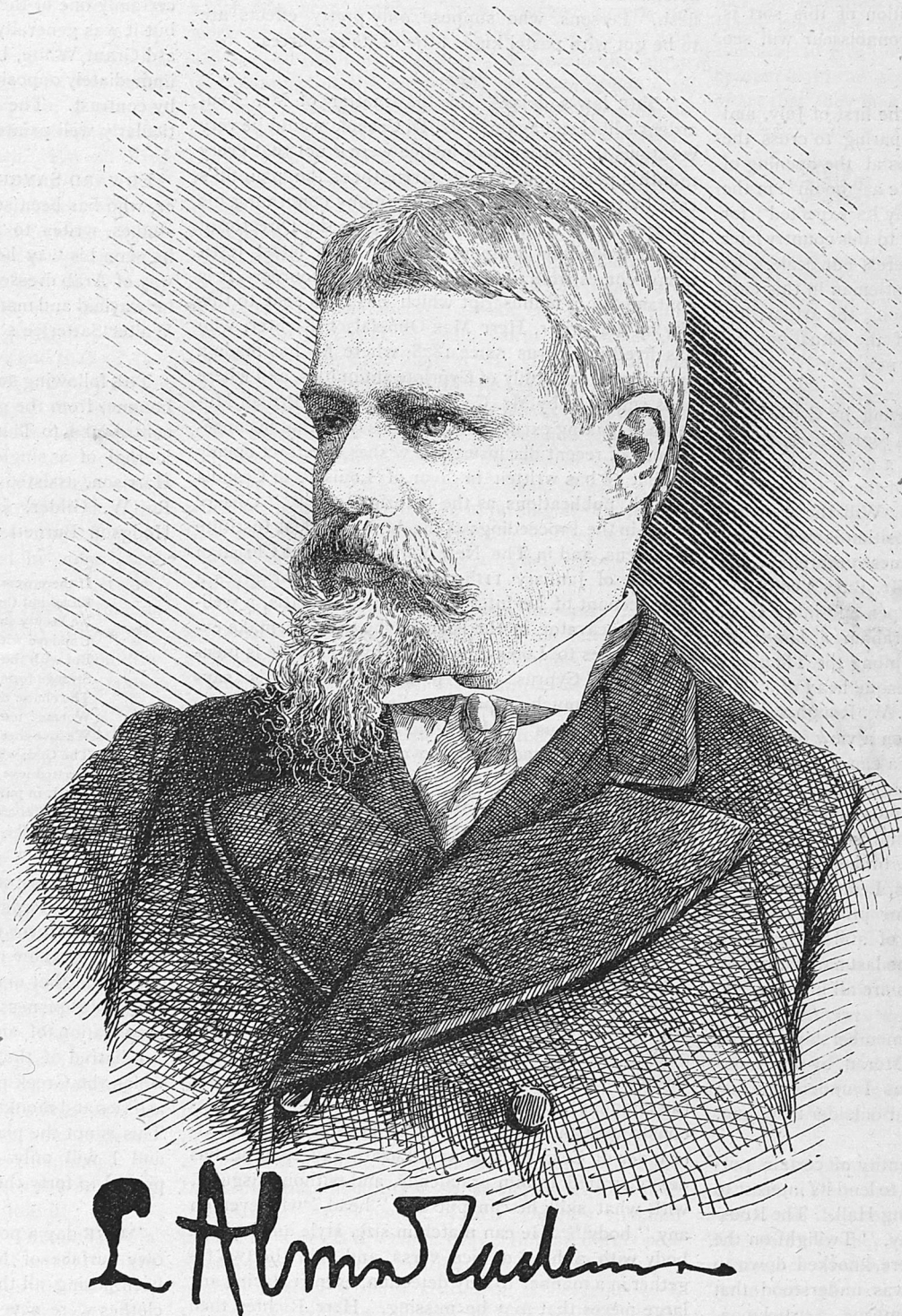
By birth Alma Tadema is a Dutchman, by inclination and naturalization an Englishman. He loves England, where he has found a happy wedded home, and he is proud to call himself her citizen. Little indeed of his life has been spent in Holland, and those were not his happiest years. Once more is realized the saying that the prophet is not without honor save in his own country. Holland was slow to recognize the eminent genius to which she had given birth. The cradle of Tadema stood in the heart of Friesland, the most cultured and artistic province of Holland. His native place was the little village of Dourijp, where he was born, January 8th, 1836, the youngest son of a notary of Leeuwarden. The family were of ancient descent, their name being met with in Frisian chronicle and legend, but without the prefix Alma, which is distinctive of the painter only, and is derived by him from a godfather. The elder Tadema was a gifted man. He was especially fond of music, a taste his son has inherited. The mother was

a woman of unusual power of will, strength of intellect, judgment and ability. Her son inherited from her his artistic tastes. Her husband died when Lawrence was but four years old, leaving her with straitened means and a large family. Although a delicate woman, she fought with all difficulties undaunted, and inspired her son also with that power of regarding difficulties merely as things to be vanquished, that so distinguishes him. All through his life obstacles have never daunted Alma Tadema, and in early years he was

Only the study of Greek and Roman classics roused him to any interest, and it was in these years that he laid that thorough knowledge of the older writers, of the conditions of ancient life, for which he is so distinguished. His artistic instincts could only be gratified in his spare hours and in his holidays. At one time he used to make his mother wake him quite early in the morning by means of a string attached to his great toe, and then in those early hours he would devote himself to his beloved occupation. He had no one

to teach him but his own true instincts, but they were so true and he worked so ardently that as early as 1851 a picture of his was accepted for exhibition at a Dutch gallery. This, his first exhibited work, was a portrait of his sister. In his own house hangs a portrait of himself, painted about the same time. The tone is dry and hard, but there is an unmistakable vigor in the drawing that reveals, though dimly, the future master hand.

These boyhood years formed the storm and stress period of Alma Tadema's life. Tempest-tossed by conflicting desires and duties, though his spirit remained undaunted, his body succumbed to the struggle. At fifteen he was a pale, sickly lad for whom doctors and friends prophesied a brief earthly sojourn, and who was therefore told that he might gratify all his bents, with an idea of at least making happy his few remaining years. This permission once given, Alma Tadema's illness soon vanished. It was probably nothing graver than overwork and endeavor to serve two masters—the physical expression of thwarted nature's discontent that one of her chosen children should mistake his true vocation. At once the lad sought to obtain regular instruction. He appealed in vain to some Dutch artists. They did not recognize his abilities. Seeing, therefore, that his native land cast him out, Alma Tadema turned undaunted to Antwerp in Belgium, where at that time reigned great artistic activity. Two schools in especial were supreme, the Belgian-Flemish, which strove to revive the best traditions of



L. ALMA TADEMA. DRAWN BY CAMILLE PITON.

to meet with not a few. For although as a mere baby his favorite toy was a pencil and paper, although as a child he had shown the most marked talent for drawing and artistic perception, although he begged to be allowed to follow art as a vocation, his mother and guardians had decided otherwise. They hoped to see him follow in his father's career, for which they did not recognize that he was wholly unsuited. With this end in view he was sent to the public school at Leeuwarden, where he passed through a distasteful curriculum.

the land, and the cold, conventional French classicism. Alma Tadema turned to the former school and studied at the academy, under Wappers, who led the movement. To say that he worked here is not to put it strongly enough; he slaved, he labored unremittently to make up for lost time and to perfect himself in his adored art. Constitutionally energetic and persistent, now that he had found his groove, to press onward was his whole desire. The themes he chose for his pictures already indicated his future path. They were culled from half

mythic history, whose atmosphere and culture he had to recreate since data were lacking. But of these early pictures none remain. Mercilessly were they destroyed at the hand of their creator, who recognized with objective critical power that they did not attain to all he had dreamed. And nothing should go forth into the world bearing his name but what the bearer of that name deemed worthy. Such rare self-control and freedom from petty vanity were his! And to this day it is the same. Alma Tadema will sacrifice the work of days and weeks to produce a scheme of color, to introduce details of archæological lore which perhaps not one person in a thousand will recognize as nearer perfection or exactitude than that which he has effaced. Most of his pictures have hidden beneath them pictures as beau-

the grandchildren of Clovis. The queen sits enthroned watching with evident pleasure the sturdy little boys as they hurl with all their youthful force the "francisque," the two-edged axe fastened to a short wooden handle, that was the favorite weapon of the Franks. It is a picture full of life and concentrated strength, and its exhibition at Antwerp in 1861 was greeted with a chorus of applause that lifted its creator upon the shield of fame. Already there was in this picture every attribute that has made Alma Tadema's name so great: historical and archæological exactitude, strength and purity of color, simple yet forcible presentation of his theme, the high and careful finish of the old Dutch school, conjoined to the sense of beauty of the more modern French. For this picture, which was bought by a Bel-

not dead but living, and living, feeling, breathing he puts them before us. We accompany his creations into their public games, their audiences, their festivals; we see them in the unrestraint of their homes, we learn "how they enjoyed themselves in Egypt three thousand years ago," we assist at the vintage and the Pyrrhic dance. Only to enumerate all his pictures would more than fill my space, for their number far exceeds two hundred.* Yet while imparting vitality to his scenes from ancient life, Alma Tadema carefully withholds from them anything of an incongruous or modern spirit. True throughout to that which is human in all climes and ages, he does not forget to note that these peoples moved in a different mental world from ours, and that their lives and characters therefore bore the



PRINCIPAL FIGURE FROM ALMA TADEMA'S "CLEOPATRA."

DRAWN BY CAMILLE PITON FROM A SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE PAINTING IN THE ARTIST'S POSSESSION.

tiful. Calmly, remorselessly will he paint over figures and details of exquisite loveliness. No doubt he is always right, his pictures generally gain by his changes, but the loss entailed is also truly grievous.

From the school of Wappers Alma Tadema was received into the studio of the great historical and archæological painter, Hendrik Leys. The Frisian was soon to become the favorite pupil of this master, from whom he learned some valuable lessons, though he was afterward to depart from him in taste and choice of themes. His early pictures, however, reflect some of the cold precision, the dry and sombre coloring of this Antwerp school. It was while working under Leys that Alma Tadema painted the picture that brought him his first success. It was taken from Merovingian history, and depicted the education of

gian art society, Alma Tadema only received the beggarly sum of sixteen hundred francs. Twenty-five hundred francs had been the modest sum at which he had himself appraised it. But from this moment onward his fame steadily advanced, his pictures became worth their weight in gold, and soon exceeded that value. After a few more themes were culled from ancient Frankish history, he turned to Egypt, and finally to the field he has made peculiarly his own, that of Greek and Roman life. These ethnographical genre pictures have a character quite their own. They are not modern scenes translated into classical, by means of dresses and accessories; neither are they mechanical imitations of Pompeian paintings. Alma Tadema has penetrated into the real life, the atmosphere, the mode of thought of these ancient peoples; for him they are

impress of that difference. Thus he ever preserves

* Among them may be mentioned, however, "The Grand Chamberlain of His Majesty King Sesostris," and "A Roman Emperor, A.D. 41," both exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1871 (the latter also at the Paris Salon the next year); "The Mummy," shown in London in 1872 and in Paris in 1873; "The Siesta," "The Dinner," "The Wine," and "The Death of the First Born," at the Royal Academy in 1873; "The Picture Gallery" and "Joseph, Overseer of Pharaoh's Granaries," in 1874; "The Sculpture Gallery" and "Water Pets," in 1875. In 1876 he exhibited "Cleopatra" (not the one illustrated herewith, which is one of his latest works), "An Audience at Agrippa's," and "After the Dance," in 1877; "The Seasons" (four pictures) and "Between Hope and Fear," in 1878; "A Sculptor's Model" and "A Love Missile." In 1877 he sent to the Grosvenor Gallery "Sunday Morning" (illustrated herewith), "A Bath," "Tarquinius Superbus," "Phidias Showing the Frieze of the Parthenon to his Friends," etc.; in 1878, "A Bacchante," "Hide and Seek," and "Architecture," "Sculpture" and "Painting." More recent works by Alma Tadema include "Sappho," sent to the Royal Academy in 1881, and in the possession of Mr. Walters, of Baltimore (for whom also, we believe, his lately completed "Cleopatra" was painted), "The Tepidarium" and "Amo te, ama me," which were seen in New York last winter and noticed in THE ART AMATEUR. The biographical notice of Alma Tadema, herewith given, will be supplemented in a later issue by a critical review of the master's works, with further illustrations.—ED. A. A.

what men who paint for sensation and not for truth ever omit, namely, that noble, placid spirit that distinguishes Greek sculpture and gives it dignity. His very Bacchanalia preserve a measure and restraint; the religious enthusiasm is there, the gayety, but the wild frenzy of sensuous passion is held in plastic check. There is movement, there is life, but there is no overstepping the bounds of the pictorial. Alma Tadema is never theatrical.

In 1863 Alma Tadema married and settled in Brussels. The same year he first visited Italy, and beheld with his own eyes the Rome that was so familiar to him. Since then he has visited Italy several times, but he has never been to Greece or Egypt. He can conceive these countries by means of his reading and his creative imagination. In 1869 his first wife died, leaving him with two little daughters on his hands. Two years after he gave them a new mother in the person of Miss Laura Epps, herself an able artist. On his second marriage Alma Tadema removed to England, where he has resided ever since, and which he has quite made his home. Before this date his fame was already world-wide, and honors and decorations had come to him from all sides. In 1876 he was elected Associate of the English Royal Academy, in 1880 he was made Royal Academician. The orders that come to him, the demands for his pictures, are more than he can supply. Though in respect of manipulation a rapid workman, he is too careful and conscientious to complete his pictures rapidly. Even the very smallest picture has bestowed on it a wealth of thought and care. Alma Tadema, fortunately for himself and for the world, is not led astray by success; he grows, if possi-

peculiarity of his that he never makes a sketch; his pictures are put upon the canvas at once.

So much for the painter; the man is no less estimable—honored by all, beloved by those who have the privilege to know him well. Warm-hearted and generous, young artists never appeal to him in vain for help or advice; his time, his strength are always at the service of others; egotism is foreign to his nature. A

happy felicity of language, a graphic, altogether individual power of expression. His talk is like his work; it has a stamp that is all its own; even the most commonplace thing is said by Alma Tadema in a manner that is original; his briefest letter reflects this peculiarity, which is, after all, the best work of a truly original man. "All my pictures," he has said, "are the expressions of one idea, they deal with different sub-

jects, but one style of thought is expressed in them." It is the same with all else concerning him; this great artist is homogeneous throughout. H. ZIMMERN.



PRINCIPAL GROUP IN "LA FÊTE INTIME." BY ALMA TADEMA.

kindness done to him, no matter how small, he never forgets, although he is always doing kind deeds himself, and not always meeting with gratitude. But this does not deter him, he does not think unkindly of his fellowmen, his nature is as genial and sunny as his art. The only thing he hates is perfunctory work, and of course he hates this most cordially in his own art, where he best knows its evidences. He has an eye

"That winces at false work, and loves the true."

legislate on public moneys are not usually amenable to the arguments which must be used in matters pertaining even to industrial art. Mr. Leland has achieved a great point in being able to establish his school at all. The instruction is given in connection with the public schools. The sessions are held from three to five o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in the Hollingsworth school on Locust Street. Two pupils are admitted from each of the different city schools,



"A QUESTION." BY ALMA TADEMA.

ble, yet more self-critical, never losing sight of the fact that "noblesse oblige." That as a colorist he is almost unrivalled is well known; with real scientific learning, regarding his art, he combines exquisite taste and a faultless manipulation. It is a keen pleasure to watch him handle his brush and place his rare strokes, none of which are idly bestowed or fail to tell their tale. In this matter of bestowing the most careful finished workmanship, he has remained a Dutchman. It is a

"I love my art," he says, "too much to like to see people scamp it; it makes me furious to see half work, and to see the public taken in by it and not able to understand the difference." His conversation when he is in the vein for talk is suggestive and exhilarating in the extreme. With all his learning there is not a trace of pedantry about him; he assumes as though it were a matter of course that his listeners are as well-informed as himself. He speaks with earnestness and ardor, a

receiving their appointment from the teacher of their school. These pupils form two great classes, meeting on alternate days, and as a special reward a student is permitted to attend both sessions.

The amount of time given in a school year of ten months, except in those special cases alluded to, at the most is only eighty hours. How far this goes toward art education of any sort is a discouraging problem. It is here that Mr. Leland advances with what he calls

his short-hand system of drawing, which he claims is the only practical method of training children such as are found in the public schools in the principles of industrial art. Mr. Henry Fry, the Cincinnati wood carver, says the pencil is his best tool. This is evidently Mr. Leland's opinion, and the hammering, carving, modelling and painting are but translations into other materials and by different methods of the first essential training with the pencil.

It is always interesting to know the process by which men arrive at their theories, and especially is this true of a man so thoroughly identified with another pursuit as Mr. Leland, since no one could expect in any natural order of things to recognize the author of "Hans Breitman" in this Philadelphia art pedagogue.

It was in Cairo, says Mr. Leland, watching the little children making those wonderful embroideries of the East, choosing their colors so accurately and exhibiting such perfect and accurate manipulation, that the idea of training children in industrial art occurred to him. In Switzerland he saw them making the most delicate and difficult carvings. In Spain he found the children doing at a tender age valuable art work in potteries. Wherever he observed he discovered that while it would be impossible for young children to master a trade, to make a shoe, for example, they could be readily taught to design decorative patterns, work leather, mould a vase or emboss sheet brass. In this the child is but the primitive man, who makes ornaments before he has a good axe or knife. The value of art work, such as can be done by children, as a factor in national wealth has been demonstrated more than once. The value to the child as a preparation toward self-support, if sure, as it often happens, of immediate support, is of more importance still. In this light Mr. Leland's project takes its place among philanthropic schemes, and its simplicity will in all probability do much to propagate similar schools throughout the country.

The outfit of these schools is accessible in every place. In the Hollingsworth building, the drawing, modelling, and carving are done in half the upper story—a long room fitted out with five tables, some shelves, a large pine box in which the clay models are kept, an odd easel or two, and a fret-saw. The tools are



"A PARTING KISS." BY ALMA TADEMA.

very inexpensive, and with these each pupil provides himself. The greater number of the pupils are occupied with pencils and paper. To indicate as briefly as possible Mr. Leland's system of drawing, it may be said that everything tends to the production of original design. Instruction begins with practice in drawing a light, clear, free-hand line. Then a simple leaf or ornament must be accurately copied and repeated in varied positions, about a circle or forming a garland. Then more complicated forms are given and varied in like manner. The principles of construction follow. Circles are changed into spirals and volutes; the curving V is thrown off from the sides as the skeleton of all elegant design. These lines are then arranged in parallels or doubled, forming diminishing vines or cords. To this ornament succeeds by applying "finials" and "crochets," technical terms which need not be explained here. In this way the course proceeds. Children are allowed to use compasses, rules, stencils, and any mechanical aid they may choose, Mr. Leland believing that they throw these aside in impatience as soon as they can dispense with them. And not only is this the case, but that familiarity with branching curves which they soon possess contributes greatly to a bold, dashing, free-hand style. The first designs, he insists, should all be large, and as a general rule nothing that cannot be seen by the eye at the distance of fifteen feet, since one who can draw in a large way can always easily execute small subjects, but never so easily the reverse. One of the principal aids to largeness in drawing is in the free sweep of the hand from the shoulder, instead of resting it, as so many pupils do, at the wrist. No shading or picturesque effect is permitted, Mr. Leland considering that the mind is thereby hindered. The motives given in the first instances are from copies; this copy, however, is nothing but the elementary form, the combinations in a regular design the pupil must make for himself. In the classes seen at work different children were found adapting copies from the flat to clay vases and other round forms, in combinations.

Of the pupils who had acquired the necessary instruction in drawing and were putting their knowledge in practice in decorative work, the most interesting were the classes in

modelling. It is an odd fact that skill in modelling appears to be more easily reached than in drawing. The articles modelled showed greater originality than the work in other branches. The evident tendency of the school is toward the grotesque. Lobsters, crabs, beetles, and the ever-popular frog were ingeniously introduced as the ornaments of vases. Lizards and serpents served as handles for very creditable shapes, and their ugliness was redeemed by a genuine sense of humor, many "character" traits being happily rendered. On a table covered with articles modelled in clay, there was none with floral ornament, or showing any effort toward the merely beautiful. The reason of this does not appear, unless, as the pupils are working from nature, flowers in winter might prove too perishable and too expensive models.

Two new branches of decorative work have been introduced by Mr. Leland. These are hammered brass and a revival of old Spanish stamped leather. As decorative work requiring special skill neither of these can compare with wood carving or modelling. Both, however, are interesting, and will doubtless often prove remunerative. The chief work in each case is in the preparation of the design. A thin sheet of brass is fastened on a wooden block, and the design, traced on paper, is laid upon it. Then with a mallet and small punch resembling a chisel, the design is traced on the brass and afterward thrown by hammering into higher relief, while the ground is stamped by another punch called a mat. After a certain facility is acquired the work becomes to a great extent mechanical, and can be executed equally well in sheet-iron, tin, pewter, copper or silver.

Stamped leather work is done in much the same way. The leather is soaked in alum water for a few hours and stretched on a board. The pattern is then traced with a toothed wheel. The design is afterward thrown into relief with a small hand wheel, and the background is then stamped and roughened with a punch. When dry the design may be colored in flat tints. The prevailing taste of Mr. Leland's pupils is shown also in the designs of both the repoussé brass and the stamped leather. These were generally some animal, a fish or griffin, for example, forming some geometrical figure, surrounded by branching curves, and they were for the most part bold and effective.

The whole work of the school is decidedly interesting, and in the line of its original intention some of the younger pupils have already found it lucrative. M. G. H.

PORTRAIT DRAPERY.

I.

It is well known that the color of the skin and complexion can be greatly modified by the color of the drapery; the modification may have the effect of enhancing or injuring the result aimed at, according as the painter is familiar with or ignorant of the law of contrast. The painter is often, especially with the fair sex, compelled in matters of costume to submit to the caprice of the sitter; when, however, he is at liberty to choose for himself the colors and arrangement of the drapery, he will naturally strive to produce the best result within his power.

In order to proceed intelligently, he will regard women as generally belonging to one of two types: the one

comprising those with light hair and blue eyes, the other, those with black hair and black eyes, the complexion of each of these being more or less white, and in certain parts rosy. Now it must be evident that the juxtaposition of the head-dress and other articles of the

not of color, and the parts of the skin contiguous to the hair, the eyebrows and eyelashes, give rise only to a harmony of analogy, either of scale or of hue. In the fair type, then, the harmonies of analogy evidently predominate over the harmonies of contrast.

The type with black hair, considered in the same way as the type with fair hair, shows us the harmonies of contrast predominating over the harmonies of analogy, for the hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, and eyes contrast in tone and color, not only with the white of the skin, but also with the red parts, which in this type are really redder, or less rosy than in the blonde type, and a decided red associated with black gives to the latter the character of an excessively deep color, either blue or green.

Custom, based upon experience, has already decided upon those colors which assort best with light or black hair, and they are those which produce the greatest contrasts; thus sky-blue, known to accord well with blondes, is the nearest color complementary to orange, which is the base of the tint of their hair and complexions. Two colors long esteemed to accord well with black hair—yellow and red, more or less orange—contrast

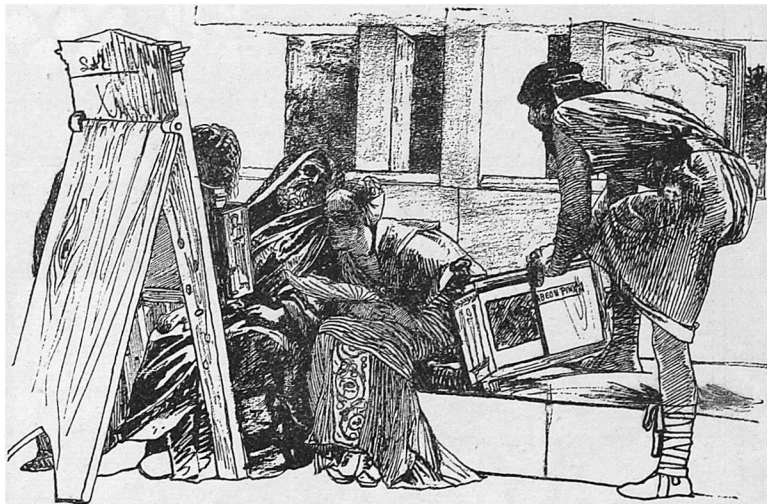
in the same manner with them. The juxtaposition of the drapery with the various flesh tints of women, will suggest to the portrait-painter many remarks arising from the principles before laid down. The most important will be here noticed.

Red Drapery.—Pink or rose-red put in contrast with rosy complexions causes them to lose some of their freshness; it is necessary, then, to separate the rose-color from the skin in some way, and the simplest is (without having recourse to colored stuffs), to edge the draperies with a border of lace, which produces the effect of gray by the mixture of the white threads which reflect light, and the interstices which absorb it, and there is also a mixture of light and shade which recalls the effect of gray. Dark red is less objectionable for some complexions than rose-red, because, being deeper than this latter, it tends to impart whiteness to them, in consequence of contrast of tone.

Green Drapery.—A light delicate green is, on the contrary, favorable to all fair complexions which are deficient in rose, and to which more may be imparted without objection; but to complexions already too red, it is not so favorable, nor to those which have a tint of orange mixed with brown, because the red added to this tint by the green will appear of a brick-red hue. In this case, a dark green will be less objectionable than a delicate green.

Yellow Drapery.—Yellow is even less favorable to a fair skin than light green, because it imparts violet to it. To such skins as are more yellow than orange, it imparts white, but such a combination is very dull and heavy for a fair complexion. When the skin is tinted more with orange than with yellow, we can make it rosy by neutralizing the yellow. Yellow produces this effect upon the black-haired type, and thus it is that it suits brunettes.

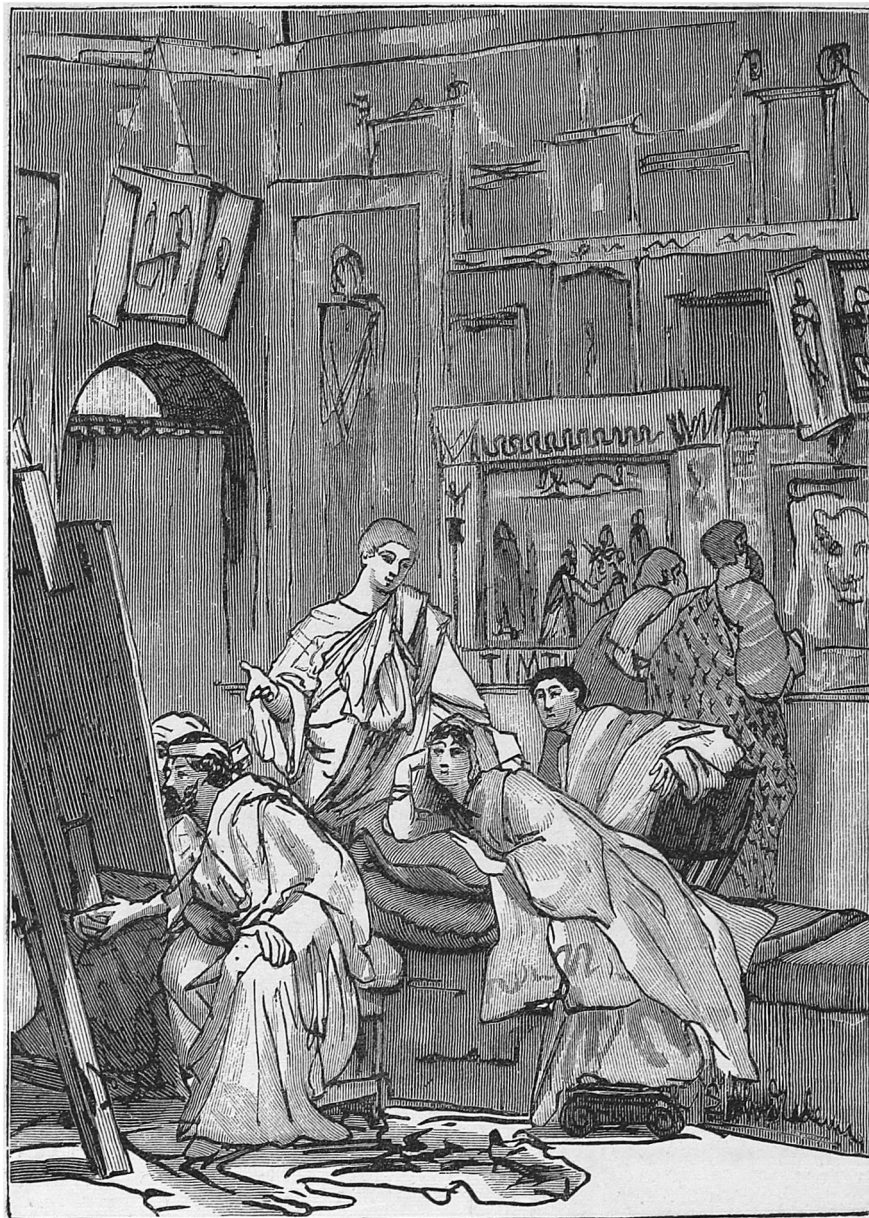
Violet Drapery.—Violet, the complementary of yellow, produces the contrary effect; for it imparts some greenish-yellow to fair complexions. It augments the yellow tint of yellow and orange skins. The little blue there may be in a complexion it makes green; violet, then, is one of the least favorable colors for the skin.



"ANTISTIVUS SABEON, OR THE ROMAN MEISSONIER." BY ALMA TADEMA.

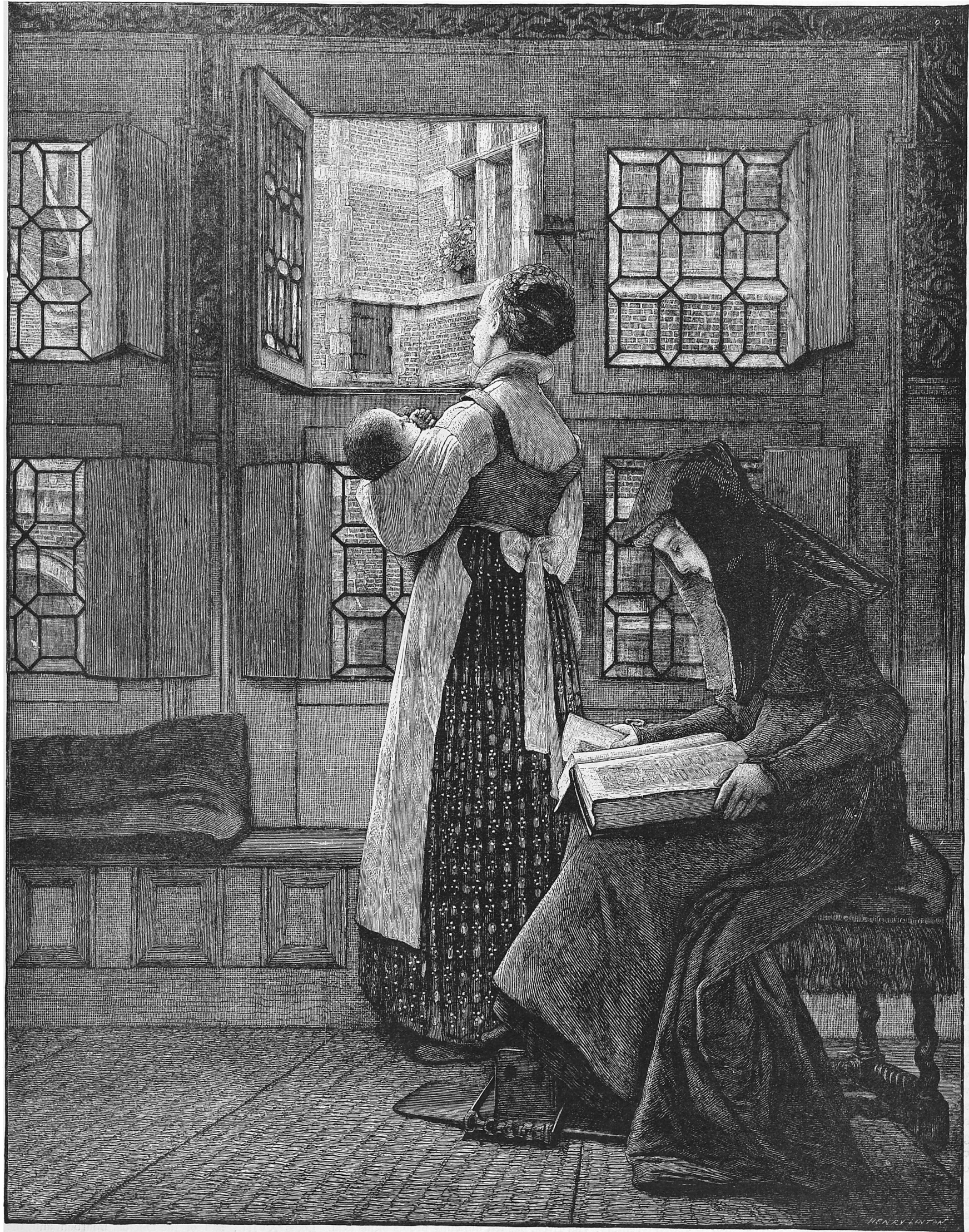
toilet, should be a matter of profound consideration, for a color may contrast favorably with the hair, yet produce a disagreeable effect with the skin.

Light hair is essentially of a color resulting from a mixture of red, yellow, and brown, therefore a very pale orange brown, the color of the skin, although of a



FIRST IDEA OF "THE PICTURE GALLERY." BY ALMA TADEMA.

lower tone, is analogous to it, except in the red parts; blue eyes are therefore the only parts of the fair type which contrast with the hair and complexion, for the red parts produce only a harmony of analogy with the rest of the skin, or at most only a contrast of hue and



"SUNDAY MORNING." BY ALMA TADEMA.